

Summer 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The A.E. Finley YMCA is cooperating with my doctoral dissertation research, which examines how rising 4th graders through rising 9th graders maintain a positive outlook. I am writing to describe this study and to invite your child to participate.

The research examines age differences in perspectives on everyday, disappointing experiences. The work is based on previous studies that indicate that how we interpret major life events affects our health and adjustment. At this time, however, little is known about developmental changes in the ways in which we interpret more minor and usual disappointing experiences (e.g., losing a sports game or having a disagreement with a friend). In doing so, we hope that this research will help us learn more about typical memory and emotional development. We also hope that this research will contribute to the identification of positive coping strategies at different ages.

All of the procedures in this study are completed in one session requiring 30 minutes. With your permission, your child will be interviewed at the A.E. Finley YMCA. Each child will be asked to discuss two moderately disappointing experiences from the past six months. Then, each child will be asked to recount the story of each event, as well as their thoughts and feelings pertaining to that event, into a tape recorder. Following this, each child will rate several aspects of the impact of the events selected. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary, and he or she may withdraw at any time. The children's responses are identified only by number to protect their privacy.

With regard to benefits, there is some research which has found that writing or talking about stressful experiences is associated with positive psychological outcomes, such as decreased anxiety and higher academic and work motivation. Additionally, each child will be given a \$5 Target gift card to thank them for their participation.

Of course, we cannot interview your child without your permission and your child's permission. If your child has permission to take part, please sign the accompanying consent form, indicate a preferred date/time and have your child return it to the camp office manager.

Please call me at (919) 357-1804 or email me at Mary_Styers@ncsu.edu if you have any questions about this study. You may also contact my supervising professor, Dr. Baker-Ward at (919) 515-1731. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Mary Styers, M.S.
Graduate Student in Developmental Psychology

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

(This consent form is valid from December 15, 2008 through December 15, 2009)

Title of Study: Narrative accounts of everyday problem experiences

Principal Investigator: Mary Styers, M.S.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Lynne Baker-Ward

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate children's reports of everyday events that are moderately negative and to explore their perceptions of these experiences.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, they will be asked to meet with a researcher on one occasion that will last approximately 30 minutes. Your child will be asked to select two recent life experiences, one a disappointing experience in an important domain and one a disappointing experience in a non important domain. The reports will be audio-recorded. Participants will also complete ratings scales that summarize their perceptions of the impact of these experiences and answer some background questions so that we can describe the sample as a whole.

Risks

Although there is minimal risk involved in this study, it is possible that describing past experiences could exacerbate pre-existing stress in some children. In the event that you observe symptoms of anxiety in your child following the interview and would like our assistance in obtaining counseling, please contact us for referral assistance. However, there is no provision for free services.

Benefits

Previous research has suggested that talking about stressful experiences is associated with positive outcomes, such as reductions in anxiety and increases in academic and work motivation. It is also hoped that the results of this experiment will contribute to the understanding of children's interpretation and reactions to their experiences.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be strictly maintained unless a participant's narrative describes plans to harm him- or herself or others or discloses child abuse. These circumstances would necessitate breaching confidentiality and alerting the appropriate authorities. Audiotapes and transcriptions of these tapes, identified only by a number, will be kept in a locked office and available only to the researchers. The master list linking names and numbers will be stored separately in a locked file in a faculty office and destroyed when interviews are transcribed.

Compensation

For participating in this study your child will receive a five dollar Target gift card. If your child withdraws from the study prior to its completion, your child will receive a five dollar Target gift card.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Mary Styers, M.S., at NCSU, Department of Psychology, 2310 Stinson Drive, Raleigh, NC 27695, or (919) 357-1804.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514), or Joe Rabiega, IRB Coordinator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-7515).

Consent To Participate

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to let my child participate in this study with the understanding that he/she may withdraw at any time.”

Parent’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Child’s Name _____ Date of Birth (Month/Day/Year): _____

Investigator’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Preferred Day of Week (please choose one): **WEDNESDAY** **THURSDAY** **FRIDAY**

Preferred Time (please choose one): **Morning (7:30 AM – 9:00 AM)** -or- **Afternoon (4:30 PM-6:00 PM)**